

Doers of the Word

Anyone travelling north on I-35 has probably noticed the construction project of a flyover bridge in Ames connecting I-35 to Hwy 30. The bridge has become something of a sore spot for the Iowa Department of Transportation as a Minnesota construction company was awarded the bid for the job at \$23M. Earlier this summer contractors discovered that the bridge piers put in place were not at the right elevation due to either a survey or math error. Before this error was discovered, a previous pier was put in place and dismantled because the contractor did not feel that it turned out according to design. All these construction flaws have significantly pushed back the projected completion date for the bridge and have added to its hefty construction cost.

Of course, we might be tempted to point out to the DOT that there are a lot of great engineering students just down the road at Iowa State but that might be pouring salt on an open wound. At any rate, we are assured that the Minnesota firm is absorbing all cost overages for the project and not the Iowa taxpayer. Miscalculations can be very costly in this world.

In the book of James, the writer warns his readers of the danger of making a miscalculation in the spiritual realm. In James 1:22 we read the words: ‘prove yourselves doers of the word and not hearers only who delude themselves.’ The particular word used for delude is a common term referring to someone making a miscalculation or error in reasoning. James says that the one who says he has faith but never bothers to do what the Bible says is simply a person making a very poor calculation or error in judgment. He is like the builder of the bridge using wrong calculations. His life and faith are off base and will have to be torn down and reconfigured.

Instead, James tells us we show proper understanding when we recognize that a living and true faith in Christ is evidenced by the ‘doing of the Word’. A Christian is someone who seeks to implement the teachings and commands of Jesus into his daily life. As he prays for God to ‘forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors’ – he then forgives that brother or sister, or mother or father for last year’s offense. When the Christian reads in the Bible the importance of things like prayer, Scripture, and fellowship – she then acts upon such truths. Such is the very nature of being a doer of the word.

Making a miscalculation over the height of a bridge pier is costly. Making a miscalculation in the spiritual realm is nothing short of a disaster. Praise God no one need be deceived. We have all the truth we need to avoid such error when we open the pages of Scripture and allow the Word of God to guide our judgment and keep us from miscalculations.